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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR.

4 Jan. 1952

SUBJECT Analysis of the Present Czech
Political Situation

NO. OF PAGES

7

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1. The transfer of Rudolf Slansky from a Party policy-making position as Secretary General of the KSC (Czechoslovak Communist Party) to a mere administrative function as deputy Prime Minister, was a demotion, the meaning and import of which cannot be mistaken, especially since his new duties have not been defined. According to protocol the Secretary General is listed fourth in precedence, outranked by the President, the President of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister. However, in actual practice the Secretary General has been second only to the President. Furthermore, since the Secretary General's office was the executive center for Party policies as well as governmental activities, and since the Secretary General's duties involved reporting the latest developments to his three nominal governmental superiors greatly influencing their decisions, he sometimes actually superseded the President.
2. This state of affairs was tolerable at the beginning of the new regime when Klement Gottwald was occupied with elementary goals, questions of a national character and changes necessary to implement the new regime. If Gottwald had been satisfied to hold a figurehead position, it is unlikely that the conflict would have been precipitated. Gottwald did not wish to be head of the government in name only, however. Therefore, a new phase was bound to develop, more firmly establishing him as the head of the government and placing in his hands the centralized power of the State.(1)
3. Gottwald and Slansky do not actually differ in their political concepts, but only in the expression and practical application thereof. Both are Moscow men, but Slansky was created by Moscow while Gottwald already had a political personality which Moscow merely formed. At the very beginning, when the change from the "bourgeois democracy" to the "people's democracy" was first begun, Gottwald wished to effect it with less force and, even though he followed Moscow's line, to allow some of it to develop gradually. This attitude was out of practical consideration for the peculiarities existing in Czechoslovakia.

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Class. Changed To: TS S (M)

Auth: HR 70-2

Date: 29 AUG 1978

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He furthermore wished to pursue his program with a minimum of economic upheaval, thereby retaining popularity for the Party. Slansky's methods, on the other hand, were much more radical, forceful, and without consideration for the differences between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Gottwald's line of action was considered nationalistic, especially in the West, although it is far removed from the nationalist concept. Slansky's radical approach gained preference for him since it seemed to guarantee to the Soviets the desired results in a very short time.

4. Before Gottwald could achieve his goal of becoming the true chief of the state, he required not only a good opportunity, but above all had to consider Moscow's aims for Czechoslovakia and the development of those aims from the viewpoint of the entire Soviet program. Toward the end of 1950 it appeared that such an opportunity had begun to develop, mainly because of the economic situation and a series of internal measures inspired by Slansky. The situation crystallized in 1951 and was followed by the change in authority, achieved partly by reorganizing the party apparatus and partly by adapting the state apparatus to the new conditions, though still emphasizing a closer approach to the Soviet system. The initiative formerly exercised by Slansky has gradually been taken over by Gottwald. This change was actually only structural and formal, and not a radical alteration of political concept.
5. A change of this sort could only be made by reorganizing the existing leadership. The KSC's internal organization had formerly been completely different from the organization of the other Communist parties, especially of the Soviet Party, which has now become the KSC's model. The former structure of the KSC was unable to satisfy Moscow's new demands and its reorganization according to the Soviet pattern was necessary. This condition primarily required changes at the top and the dissolution of the leading functions of the KSC's Central Committee Secretariat, the latter being, under the altered conditions, the cause of unwieldiness and of a duality of political leadership. Under the new conditions and the new demands for increased centralization, the system of two leading Party offices, those of Chairman and Secretary General and their deputies, became superfluous.
6. The Chairman of the KSC has therefore taken over the function of the Secretary General, and a staff of Party Secretaries will be set up for the individual, main sectors, replacing the Secretary General's deputies and conforming to the organization of the Soviet Communist Party. It is probable that Gottwald will stop using the title of Party Chairman in the near future and will adopt the title of Secretary General, as is done in the other Communist Parties. It is furthermore possible that Gottwald, in order to quiet dissatisfaction, is now adopting a more liberal attitude toward making policy and administrative changes in those sectors where the situation does not require quick and decisive action which would meet with resistance. (2)
7. In these early stages Gottwald was interested in the over-all question of the economic and political changes rather than in the detailed forms; but Gottwald also followed a considered, tactical procedure in that he remained practically aloof so that all responsibility for the working methods would be laid at Slansky's door. At first there seemed to be little doubt that the Slansky plan as a whole would be successful, and since it could be proved mathematically that it was bound to succeed, the danger of using unpopular methods was not considered serious in view of the actually rising living standards. The first complication arose from changes in the basic plan which became necessary to meet Soviet demands, from the worsened international situation, particularly in view of its trade repercussions, and from the accelerated integration of the Czechoslovak economy into the Soviet armament plan.

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8. Though the change to a Socialist state was actually made in the course of 1949, the full effects were not felt until 1950. Since the causes for the adverse effects were not too clear, they became a matter for discussion, even among Party members. There was a division of opinion as to the correctness of the current Party management, and there was also evidence of some opposition to Slansky's policies. Sharp fluctuations and inequalities developed in the economy, which situation developed into a vicious circle. New and additional rules and regulations were required, which in turn increased the unpopularity of the entire program. (3)
9. This dissatisfaction naturally did not find expression centrally. It was shown in individual sectors, especially in some of the more afflicted regions (krajs), where the Party functionaries began to adapt directives from Prague to local conditions, thereby coming into conflict with the central administration which was accused of living in a vacuum, of not approaching problems realistically, of ruling in an undemocratic fashion without consulting in advance those functionaries who were responsible for the implementation of central directives. The accusation was made that the Central Committee of the KSC had a formal role only and not a factual one, the factual control having been taken over by the central administration. (4)
10. This disagreement with the central administration appeared in a large number of regions, especially in the heavily industrialized regions such as Pilsen, Moravska Ostrava, Usti nad Labem, Brno, Olomouc and Bratislava. (5) The internal Party situation, furthermore, aggravated the economic chaos so that more radical measures became necessary to effect stabilization. A special governmental delegation consisting of Dr. Antonin Gregor, Minister of Foreign Trade, and Dr. Jaromir Dolansky, director of the State Planning Office, spent three and two months respectively in Moscow negotiating further alterations (mostly increased Soviet requirements) dictated by the Kremlin. For a short time these negotiations were also attended by the Minister of Heavy Industry, Gustav Klimet, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vilem Siroky, the latter primarily as a Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the industrialization of Slovakia.
11. The new Soviet demands could not be met without some political and personnel changes. Therefore, Rudolf Slansky made a secret trip to Moscow where he submitted a solution which would work to Moscow's advantage. Gottwald was not informed in detail about Slansky's plan and certainly not about Slansky's presentation of it in Moscow. Slansky's solution consisted of the preparation of a great purge which would remove all opposition to him; this opposition was defined as being directed against Moscow's decrees and the general Party line. Slansky had plenty of material to substantiate his position, (such as the anti-Soviet tendencies which were disclosed by the opposition movement) so that his plan for the purge was accepted as vital to the successful fulfillment of economic goals and establishment of internal stability. Moscow was especially interested in increasing the capacity of the armament industries, but the suppression of the opposition could also be utilized in propaganda.
12. However, Slansky's position was at that time already considerably shaken. Moscow pointed out to him that the formation of the opposition within the Party and its inclusion of several outstanding Party and government functionaries occurred during his political leadership. Therefore, the purge in the Party and in the state apparatus was carried out not only by Slansky but was also coordinated with other Party functionaries, primarily with Gottwald, Siroky, and Vaclav Kopecky. Gottwald used this opportunity to occupy the decisive positions in the Party with his own people, making his later complete assumption of power possible. In addition to Svermova, Sling, Manus Lonsky, (fnu) Landa, (fnu) Polak and others, Josef Pavel, Bedrich Reicin, Arthur London, and Vavro Hajdu were also removed from their positions during the later phases of the purge, and Siroky's opposition in Slovakia, consisting among others of Gustav Husak, Ladislav Novomesky, Karol Smidke, and Lace Holdos, was liquidated. The purge which Slansky inspired and which

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was intended to strengthen his position in the Party resulted rather in the strengthening of Gottwald's position and in the weakening of Slansky's.

13. Beria was present in Prague for several days before the official announcement of the purge. His visit was secret and the precise purpose or character of it is not known. Beria probably did not directly interfere in the events in Prague to any great extent, but rather judged and evaluated these events from Moscow's standpoint. (6) In view of the present trend of events it is, however, possible that Beria's Prague visit resulted in a further strengthening of Gottwald's position and a weakening of Slansky's through the adoption of Gottwald's viewpoint at the expense of Slansky's political concept.
14. It was necessary for Gottwald to consider both the increased interests of Moscow in Czechoslovakia, as previously stated, and also the over-all deteriorating situation which came to light during the first part of 1951. Furthermore, the unpopularity of the policies of the regime and the necessity of further unpopular measures if Moscow's demands were to be fulfilled had to be taken into account. In view of this, Gottwald's program was completely in line with Moscow's interests. His program may have been explained to Moscow on the basis of a number of facts:
 - a. The failure of Slansky's political leadership in economic matters.
 - b. The need for a change in the Party structure in accordance with the Soviet pattern including the abolition of the unhealthy duality between the Party and the state apparatus, that is, between Slansky and Gottwald, which was having worse and worse effects.
 - c. The necessity for removing unpopular individuals from leading positions to achieve a partial appeasement of public opinion.
 - d. The desirability of relaxing controls in certain sectors in view of the increased tasks and demands in more important matters.
15. The first of these points would not be difficult to substantiate as the proof was in the over-all internal situation, both economic and political. This charge against Slansky is also related to point c. Although the economic failure was caused by improper administration and by the faulty cadre policies of the responsible persons in the individual sectors, Slansky, as leader of the Party apparatus, would be held accountable. Ladislav Kopriva also held a responsible position, but since the Party leadership does not want to be collectively liable for mistakes, it has to place this responsibility on the leading Party functionary, corresponding to the Soviet principle of responsibility. (7)
16. Gottwald's efforts to assume authoritative power in the army, the security organs, the Party, and the trade unions and to achieve a decisive position in the economic life of the country illustrate his rise. Gottwald did not have any great influence on the purges of the beginning of 1951, nor did he exercise power in a single sector of the government with the possible exception of security, where Kopriva's position regarding his relationship to Gottwald and Slansky was never defined. Gottwald did achieve much more control in the army when he replaced Ludvik Svoboda with Alexej Cepicka, although he assumed complete power only after the removal of Reicin, a direct Moscow exponent who had actual control over the army. Gottwald could achieve control in the Party, however, only by removing Slansky from leadership. The trade unions,

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where the control is still exercised by Zapotocky, remain as the only sector where Gottwald has not yet completely secured his position. (U) It is probable that Gottwald will now take measures to achieve power in the trade unions, making the necessary personnel changes there.

17. Gottwald's success in liquidating the Moscow exponents in these latest changes can possibly be explained by one of the following interpretations. In the early phases of the Czech Communist regime Moscow required direct contacts in control, since it was not then possible for the Kremlin to introduce its own people to represent its interests. Now that Soviet experts and advisers are employed in all significant sectors of government and industry, the Kremlin may have decided to abandon the outmoded apparatus as superfluous if not disadvantageous, since her own personnel provided a reliable and complete survey of all the basic phases of endeavor in Czechoslovakia as well as maintaining control of them in Moscow's interests. In addition, Gottwald was probably able to convince the Kremlin that a new centralization of the entire government apparatus would not only be more advantageous for Moscow's interests, but at the same time would remove the duality or even multiplicity which had made its operations difficult. The removal of Kocin and perhaps even of Pavel was a Moscow confirmation of the correctness of Gottwald's viewpoint.
18. The second possibility is that the main impetus in this matter came directly from the Kremlin and coincided with Gottwald's own interests. Thus it may have been unnecessary for him to do anything but point to the need for altering the existing procedures which Slansky employed and for other organizational changes, including the establishment of a Ministry of State Control, and the division of the Ministry of Industry into five ministries for specific sectors as a result of the additional burdens placed on Czechoslovak industry. (9)
19. These changes in the Czech regime indicate that Moscow is placing the greatest emphasis on the industrial exploitation of Czechoslovakia, whose major role is the fulfillment of the Soviet Union's industrial program. The political stabilization of Czechoslovakia, which to date has been Moscow's primary consideration with all the satellites, accompanied by economic measures designed to reorient the satellites along the same political lines, is now a secondary issue. Today it appears the USSR has abandoned that policy and is now entering a new policy phase throughout its sphere of influence in which Soviet military considerations are the paramount issue.
20. A similar internal change occurred in the USSR before WW II when Soviet political interests bowed to Soviet military requirements so that maximum production could be attained in all industrial branches. The new increased demands on Czech industry, which have become evident through such measures as the accelerated fulfillment of the Five Year Plan and the industrialization of Slovakia, give evidence that Czechoslovakia is undergoing the same conversion. Furthermore, although they are parallel programs for the full utilization of the existing Czech industrial potential, the construction of new Czech industrial plants in less vulnerable areas and in the hinterland and the concurrent relocation of existing factories to more strategic areas are of secondary importance to the Soviets; these programs would require considerable time and result in a slowdown of the USSR's war preparation. These facts possibly indicate that the USSR does not consider another war an immediate risk and is therefore giving precedence to the maximum utilization of the existing industrial installations in the Satellites despite the militarily unstrategic location of many of them. However, it should not be thought that the Soviets have totally discounted the ultimate possibilities of war by the completion of the industrial expansion program.

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21. Further changes in fundamental policies are to be observed in the Czechoslovak army. To the present time the main consideration has been for the systematic political education of the army and the training of firm, individual cadres for positions of leadership. These policies, which were carried out by Reicin and were adopted by Cepicka at the beginning of his term of office, resulted in establishing important positions in the army for so-called political commissars. At present these basic policies have been changed in so far as the emphasis has been shifted to mass fighting morale (sic) and combat training; these are supplemented by political education. But individual education and cadre formation have been deemphasized and the increased fighting potential of the army as a whole has been accented. Simultaneously, the jurisdiction of the political commissars has been limited and the position of the unit commander, who has been given additional power, has been reaffirmed.
22. A definite change in the general Moscow line was doubtless the cause or condition of the fundamental changes which have taken place in Czechoslovakia and in the KSC. It is possible that the specific changes themselves originated in Moscow, or that they are a result of over-all changes in the general Communist line. In addition, these changes are accompanied, as they were in the USSR, by the removal of individuals who are not popular with the masses. The removal of Jews from leading positions was practiced by Moscow during World War II and is again today, at the moment in the army. The same line is followed in the Czech army today where, according to the latest decrees, Jews may not be appointed to leading positions. These tactics are used to exploit nationalist tendencies as long as they do not threaten the over-all program.(10) It is possible that the removal of Slansky was for such a purpose and merely a temporary measure.
23. It is a fact that these changes and upheavals do not aid the policies of the Party, or the internal situation. Violent falls and changes in personnel evoke uncertainty, undermine morale, and reduce willingness to assume any sort of responsibility. The Party and Gottwald will undoubtedly make every effort to take those measures which will achieve tranquility and will bring about renewed stability as quickly as possible.
24. There will probably not be any changes in policy, however, [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 [redacted] Although the present policies of Gottwald will not continue in the footsteps of Slansky's in every detail, the only change will consist in the fact that there will soon be no one either in the Party or in the state even approximating Gottwald's position or power. Policies, which will still be in the interests of Moscow, will henceforth be issued by the President rather than by deputies in the former decentralized fashion. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 the Kremlin's interests are not endangered by the centralization of the Czech government and Communist Party because today it has a direct means of following developments in Czechoslovakia and, in case of need, it can put new personalities into leading positions. Gottwald's aides, such as Siroky and Kopecky, are also Moscow men and may be used at some later date by the Kremlin to offset Gottwald's power. The increased popularity of one of these potential rivals, Vilem Siroky, is encouraged by Moscow in spite of the fact that he belongs among Gottwald's followers. As far as Kopecky is concerned, [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 [redacted] he will probably continue to remain the chief adviser of Gottwald since [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 he has no other apparent functions beyond his membership in the KSC Praesidium.
25. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
 [redacted] Gottwald is not really acting in the interests of Moscow, but has chosen to seek concentration of power in his own hands and may be considering declaring Czechoslovakia's neutrality at the critical moment when another war threatens to sweep across the nation. [redacted]

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Gottwald's policy of basing his action on the specific conditions peculiar to Czechoslovakia, as opposed to Slansky's inelastic, pro-Moscow policy, and adds that those Communists who took part in the development of the Party in Czechoslovakia are more likely to remain faithful to Moscow than more recent devotees. Thus, [] Gottwald has sought to place in positions of authority either people devoted to him personally regardless of ability or those who promise to be easily controlled because of their ineptitude. His purpose is not for the benefit of Moscow but of Czechoslovakia in the event of a war. This is, [] the basis for all Gottwald's present and future actions made in an apparent effort to satisfy Moscow's demands.

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- (1) [] Comment: Another factor contributing to the clash between Gottwald and Slansky was the state of the personal relations between the two men, which have been poor since Slansky, through the intervention of Moscow, was established in the Party organization replacing Jan Sverma. Before long Slansky was in control of the entire Party apparatus, thereby isolating Gottwald.
- (2) [] Comment: The modification of the program for collectivization in agriculture is an example of this development.
- (3) [] Comment: Specific instances were the agricultural program and the increased norms for workers, especially since the increased production did not correspondingly increase the workers' pay. 50X1-HUM
- (4) [] Comment: It may be [] referring to the Political Secretariat.
- (5) [] Comment: One of the strongest proponents of the opposition was Otto Sling. During Slansky's long illness in 1950 the opposition movement made great strides, principally because of the lackadaisical manner in which Slansky's chief deputy, Marie Svermova, opposed it. It is even possible Svermova assisted the opposition. 50X1-HUM
- (6) [] Comment: The only case in which Beria did take direct action was the Clementis affair.
- (7) [] Comment: The case of Arthur London is another example of the application of this Communist principle as it is employed under the pressure of necessity.
- (8) [] Comment: The actual power in the trade unions is now being wielded by Frantisek Zupka, although Zapotocky's position is still firmly entrenched with the masses.
- (9) [] Comment: The personnel chosen to fill the new government positions, such as Karel Bacilek and Jaromir Havelka, indicate that initiative is not considered a necessary asset; on the contrary, personalities able to execute orders and carefully supervise the developments are preferred.
- (10) [] Comment: These tactics could have played a role in the case of Bruno Köhler, the former chief of the Political Reliability Section of the KSC, a member of the Politburo and of the Praesidium of the KSC and a direct agent of Moscow. Köhler, who is a Sudeten German, was unpopular not only because of his personality and the political reliability policies of the Party, but also because of the fact that he had no command of the Czech language.

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